From: Dayl Cohen
To: McGovern, Marc
Subject: Re: Regarding HP boycott
Date: Thursday, April 19, 2018 5:28:41 PM

Thank you for your response.

On Thu, Apr 19, 2018 at 5:01 PM, Mayor Marc McGovern <mmcgovern@cambridgema.gov> wrote:

Dear Dayl,

Thank you for your email regarding the proposed policy order asking the City of Cambridge to no longer take part in a state program allowing us to purchase Hewlett Packard products at a reduced cost given HP's relationship with the Israeli government.

Over the course of the last few weeks there has been a great deal of misinformation circulating. Please allow me to explain what I know of this issue.

I and other Councillors were approached a few months ago by local Cambridge residents and representatives of MA Against HP and asked if we would sponsor a policy order requesting that the City Manager not renew our participation in this program and terminate our relationship with HP.

Although I don't claim to be an expert on the Middle East, many of the issues raised regarding how Palestinians are being treated concerned me. I then reached out to the Anti-Defamation League for further information and discussion. They shared their concerns about human rights violations as well, but also raised concerns about the Boycott Divest Sanction (BDS) movement.

As I began to learn more about the issue I looked more closely at the BDS movement. I became equally concerned about some of their stances and positions. As much as I don't want Cambridge to be indirectly supporting those who engage in human rights violations, I also don't want Cambridge associated with a movement that has made anti-Semitic comments. It quickly became clear that this issue went far beyond Cambridge.

Anyone who has followed me knows that human rights issues are cornerstone to my work. As a social worker for over 25 years, I have dedicated my life to working with oppressed, marginalized and vulnerable individuals and groups. While on the Cambridge School Committee I led the effort to close Cambridge Public Schools for the Muslim holiday of Eid out of respect for our Muslim students and families. As a City Councillor I took action that led to Cambridge creating a Liaison of Immigrant Affairs position and started a legal defense fund to support immigrants facing deportation. I am proud of the work I have done, with the help of many, to stand up against hatred and racism.

This issue raised a larger question for me: "What relationships, political or financial, does the City have with other companies or countries who are considered to violate human rights?" This should be a larger conversation and not one that centers on just one relationship.

I have received emails saying things like: "I can't believe the Cambridge City Council is considering this." Let me explain how the process works. Any individual Councillor has the authority to place a policy order or resolution on the agenda. The item must be placed on the agenda by 3:00 pm on the Thursday prior to the next Monday's meeting (so for something to appear on the April 23rd agenda, it must be submitted by 3 pm on Thursday, April 19th). It is only after something is placed on the agenda that it comes before the City Council. So the Council does not consider anything until the item is before us and as of the deadline of the 19th, no order was filed regarding this issue.

So, in a nutshell, this is not an issue that the Council raised on our own. This is an issue brought to us (as is often the case and I encourage) from a group of concerned residents, many of whom I know and respect. The date of the 23rd was put out , not by the City Council, but by MA Against HP because they thought a Councillor would sponsor the order.

NO ORDER HAS BEEN SUBMITTED FOR APRIL 23RD. THERFORE THIS ISSUE WILL NOT BE DISCUSSED AT THAT MEETING.

Again, it is possible that an order could appear on the agenda of a future meeting.

I hope this explains my thinking as well as the process. Thank you again for your emails and participation and passion regarding this issue and our community.

Sincerely,

Marc McGovern
Mayor
City of Cambridge

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